

*Geo. L. Ames*

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AN

# INAUGURAL ADDRESS

INTRODUCTORY TO THE COURSE

ON

# SURGERY

IN THE

Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia,

DELIVERED OCTOBER 17, 1856,

BY

SAMUEL D. GROSS, M. D.

Published by the Class.

PHILADELPHIA:

JOSEPH M. WILSON,

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1856.



# THE HISTORY OF THE

## REIGN OF KING

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY JOHN BURNET  
OF THE SOCIETY OF THE APOSTOLICAL CHURCH

IN TWO VOLUMES  
THE FIRST

FROM THE YEAR 1625 TO 1642

IN TWO VOLUMES  
THE SECOND

FROM THE YEAR 1642 TO 1649

IN TWO VOLUMES  
THE THIRD

FROM THE YEAR 1649 TO 1658

IN TWO VOLUMES  
THE FOURTH

FROM THE YEAR 1658 TO 1660



## CORRESPONDENCE.

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Jefferson Medical College.

Philadelphia, November 22d, 1856.

DR. GROSS,

*Sir*:—At a meeting of the Students of Jefferson Medical College, of Philadelphia, held on the 21st of November, upon motion of A. D. HOKE, of Georgia, HUMPHREY PEAKE, of Arkansas, was called upon to preside.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

*Resolved*:—That a Committee of seven be appointed by the President, to wait on DR. GROSS, and request of him a copy of his Inaugural Address as Professor of Surgery in the Jefferson Medical College, for publication.

The President then appointed the following named gentlemen to constitute this Committee:

<i>Chairman</i> —W. I. BUHÔT,	WEST INDIES,
D. G. RUTH,	UNITED STATES,
W. E. COOKE, M. D.,	NOVA SCOTIA,
F. E. BOND,	SOUTH AMERICA,
L. E. NORDMAN,	PRUSSIA,
JACOB SMITH,	CANADA WEST,
J. F. DE CHOUDENS,	CORSICA.

*Resolved*, That a Committee, consisting of the first Matriculate from each State, Province, or country represented in the College, be appointed, to take proper measures for the publication of the same, if agreeable to DR. GROSS.



The following gentlemen were named:

CHAIRMAN,  
HUMPHREY PEAKE, ARKANSAS.

MEMBERS:

A. S. FRYE,.....	Maine.	B. W. MITCHELL,.....	Missouri.
U. B. CHASE, Jr.,.....	Vermont.	JOHN M. PAYNE,.....	Florida.
N. M. TRIBOU, Jr.,.....	Mass.	E. C. KING,.....	Texas.
F. S. BRADFORD,.....	R. I.	D. P. JUETT,.....	Kentucky.
E. F. RAYMOND, .....	Conn.	M. D. L. JORDAN,.....	Tennessee.
MARCUS P. STEPHENSON,.	N. Y.	N. M. BROWN,.....	Ohio.
WM. H. GIBBON,.....	N. J.	W. E. MILLIKEN, .....	Indiana.
D. G. RUTH,.....	Penn.	J. H. MORRIS,.....	Illinois.
R. B. MCKEE,.....	Del.	E. H. REIGART,.....	Iowa.
R. D'ORSAY POOLE,.....	Md.	T. M. BLOUNT, JR.,.....	D. C.
W. B. LEARY,.....	Virginia.	W. E. COOKE, M. D.,.....	N. S.
E. STRUDWICK, .....	N. C.	W. I. BUHÔT,.....	W. Indies.
S. POPE, .....	S. C.	F. E. BOND, .....	S. A.
J. S. COLEMAN,.....	Ga.	JACOB SMITH,.....	Ca. West.
A. R. FOSTER,.....	Ala.	J. R. BASTIDA, .....	Cuba.
J. S. STOKES,.....	Miss.	J. F. DE CHOUDENS,.....	Corsica.
H. B. HARTMAN,.....	La.	L. E. NORDMAN,.....	Prussia.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary furnish a copy of the Minutes of this meeting to be presented by the Chairman of the Committee to DR. GROSS.

HUMPHREY PEAKE, *President*.

A. D. HOKE, *Secretary*.

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Philadelphia, cor. Walnut and Eleventh streets, Nov. 22, 1856.

GENTLEMEN:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, requesting a copy of my Inaugural Address, for publication. Although it was not written with any such intention, yet if its appearance in print can be of any service to you, either in exciting in you a greater love for your profession, or in affording you a better appreciation of the true position of your Alma Mater, I shall be most happy to place it at your disposal.

Begging you to present my best wishes to the Class, with the assurance of my readiness to co-operate with them in any measures calculated to promote their interest and happiness, I am, Gentlemen, very truly and respectfully, your friend and obedient servant,

S. D. GROSS.

To Messrs. BUHÔT, RUTH, COOKE, BOND, NORDMAN, SMITH, and DE CHOUDENS, Committee.



## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

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IN appearing here for the first time in my professional capacity, before such a large and respectable assemblage of physicians and students, it cannot be surprising that I should be deeply sensible of the novelty and embarrassment of my position. Called unexpectedly to a chair which was so long, so ably, and so eloquently filled by my predecessor, I am conscious that in accepting the appointment which was so flatteringly tendered me by the Faculty and Trustees of this Institution four months ago, I have assumed new labours, new trials, new anxieties, and new responsibilities, from which one, more prudent than myself, might well shrink. Nor is the emotion which so painfully oppresses me at all diminished by the reflection that, although a native of Pennsylvania, and a graduate of this school, I am forever separated from a people who, for nearly a quarter of a century, daily cheered me with their smiles and their confidence, and afforded me an opportunity of making myself what, in the providence of God, I am, little as that is. Cold and callous and indifferent, indeed, would be that heart that could break up such ties and such relations without the deepest sadness. It was pleasant to dwell in the land of Boone, of Clay, and of Crittenden; to behold its fertile fields, its majestic forests, and its beautiful streams; and to associate with its refined, cultivated, generous-



hearted, and chivalric people. It was there that I had hoped to spend the remainder of my days, upon objects calculated to promote the honour and welfare of its noble profession, and finally to mingle my dust with the dust and ashes of the sons and daughters of Kentucky. But destiny has decreed otherwise. A change has come over my life. I stand this evening in the presence of a new people, a stranger in a strange place, and a candidate for new favours. A new world is before me, upon whose stage I am expected to be, for a brief space, an actor, a giver and a recipient. I have left behind me many old and well tried friends, a large practice, a flourishing school, and an empire of surgery, worthy of the best talents and skill of the country. Here, on the contrary, every thing is new to me; new relations, social and professional, are to be established; new trials and difficulties are to be met and overcome; in a word, life's feverish and fretful scenes are to be re-enacted, and that too at a period of life when life should have nothing but peace and tranquillity.

When I reflect upon all this, and upon the fact that my predecessor was one of the most able and popular teachers that this country has ever produced, is it not natural that I should feel doubts and misgivings as to the future? Is it not natural that I should ask myself the question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" My age, my long residence in the West, my position, humble as it was, the inclinations and wishes of my family, and, finally, my own interests and attachments, might, and perhaps ought to, have admonished me to decline the offer of my Alma Mater, and to spend the remainder of my days, however few or many they may be, in the home of my early adoption. My duty to the University of Louisville, for sixteen years the pride and solace



of my professional life, should, perhaps, have induced me to continue faithful to her interests, and to disregard, as I had on several previous occasions, all offers, however flattering, from other schools. Finally, gratitude to the people of the South-West, among whom I had lived so long, and from whom I had received so many tokens of respect and attachment, ought, perhaps, to have bound me forever to the Valley of the Mississippi, rendered famous, in the medical world, by the learning, the science, and the achievements of a Drake, a Caldwell, and a Dudley. It is questionable whether any professional man, who has grown up, as I had, in the confidence of a great and enlightened people, should ever change his residence even for one which offers so many advantages in a social, literary, and scientific point of view, as Philadelphia, so long acknowledged as the medical emporium of the United States.

But in taking this step I have no regrets, save such as are incident to parting with one's friends, or leaving a delightful home. The field before me is large enough for any man, however lofty his ambition, or however vast his expectations. "I will not therefore," to use, in a modified form, the language of a beautiful writer, "look mournfully into the past. It comes not back again. I will endeavour wisely to improve the present. It is mine. I will go forth to meet the shadowy future, without fear, and with a manly heart."

Upwards of a quarter of a century has elapsed since I left the halls of this Institution, as one of its pupils. Little did I then anticipate that I should ever be honoured with a service in its temple as one of its high priests. At no time had I expected that I should ever be selected from among its numerous graduates for the office which has been recently assigned to me, and upon the duties of which I enter this day with all



the ardour and zeal which should animate a faithful son in his endeavours to serve and to honour a kind and loving parent. I return to the bosom of my Alma Mater with no little pride and satisfaction; pride, that she occupies so elevated a position among her sister institutions; satisfaction, that I shall be able to make her some requital, however humble, for the benefits which she conferred upon me in my youth and in my obscurity. It was here that I first heard a medical lecture; it was here that I imbibed wisdom and knowledge from the lips of a M'Clellan and an Eberle; it was here that I was honoured with the doctorate; and it was here that I received, along with twenty-four youths, aspiring and ambitious like myself, the blessing of its late venerable and distinguished President, the Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, with the injunction to go forth into the world to comfort the afflicted, to cure the halt, to open the eyes of the blind, and to pour the balm of hope and consolation into the wounds of the sick and the dying. The words of the "old man eloquent," uttered with the solemnity and unction of an apostle, sank deeply into the hearts and consciences of his young auditors. Of that small band, not one, so far as I know, has ever dishonoured his Alma Mater, or done aught to wound her feelings. If none of them have become great, they have all, or at least most of them, done good service in the cause of humanity.

How vast, how striking, the difference between the two periods here spoken of! How vast the difference between the Jefferson Medical College of 1828, and the Jefferson Medical College of 1856! Then the school was in a state of infancy, poor, helpless, without friends, without antecedents, and without any definite future. Like a vessel without compass and rudder, it



was floundering about upon a sea of uncertainty, not knowing whether it would ever be able to reach a haven of safety. It was literally struggling for an existence: nearly all its projectors were young men, without reputation and without means. Their only hope of success was their indomitable energy, their iron will, and their determination to surmount every obstacle which chance or accident might oppose to their progress. The obloquy of enemies and the predictions of failure by friends were alike disregarded. "Onward and upward," was their motto. For a time they hoped almost against hope. But despair never entered their souls. As the clouds of adversity thickened upon the horizon, they only redoubled their energies, bidding defiance even to Fate itself. Never did men work together more arduously for the attainment of a great object, or the accomplishment of a great end. For a long time the struggle was maintained against fearful odds; little progress was made in enlisting the patronage of the profession, pupils came in slowly, and the ultimate success of the enterprise was everywhere regarded as problematical. The first course of lectures was opened on Prune Street, in an old building, then known as the Tivoli Theatre, and now occupied as a manufactory of mineral water, in November, 1825, under the auspices of George M'Clellan, John Eberle, Jacob Green, B. Rush Rhees, F. S. Beattie and N. R. Smith, the present distinguished Professor of Surgery in the University of Maryland. On the 14th of April following, the school held its first commencement in the Masonic Hall of this city, when the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred upon twenty young men, representing Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, South Carolina, and Ireland. In 1830, it



seems to have entered upon a new career, pregnant with brilliant results. It was then in the sixth year of its existence, and the approaching session, to use the language of its circular, was to be opened under the most favourable auspices, every obstacle to the future advancement of the Institution having been removed. Several changes had already taken place in the Faculty. Dr. Beattie and Dr. Barnes having successively retired from the chair of Obstetrics, Dr. Eberle was now transferred to it, the professorship of medicine which he had previously filled having been assigned to Dr. Drake, of Cincinnati. The latter gentleman, who afterwards occupied so large a space in the public eye, and whose death the profession has so recently deplored, was regarded as a great acquisition to the college, on account of his reputation as a lecturer, and his practical acquaintance with the diseases of the South-West, where a majority of the alumni of the school were expected to locate themselves. Such, undoubtedly, would have been the case, if Dr. Drake had remained in Philadelphia; but at the close of the session he severed his connection with his associates, and returned to Ohio, carrying with him Dr. Eberle, one of the ablest, most popular, and most influential members of the Faculty. Thus the school sustained a double, and, for awhile, an irreparable loss. In 1836 we find the Faculty consisting of the two M'Clellans,—George and Samuel,—Granville Sharpe Pattison, John Revere, Jacob Green, Samuel Colhoun, and Robley Dunglison, “formerly Professor of Physiology in the University of Virginia, and late Professor of Materia Medica in the University of Maryland.” From the catalogue from which these facts are taken it appears that the number of students in 1832 and '33,—



the year after the retirement of Drake and Eberle,—was only 96, from which it rose to 364, in 1835 and '36, with a graduating class of 134. Such an increase might, one would suppose, have satisfied the most ambitious and aspiring corps of teachers, and induced the conviction that the school was now reposing upon a solid and substantial basis, capable of withstanding any shock, however severe, that might be directed against it. But such was not the fact; for we find, two years later, that the number of pupils had dwindled down to 248, and of graduates to 102. The following year there was a still further decline in its prosperity; and in the spring of 1839, things had attained such a crisis as to render a reorganization of the college not only expedient, but absolutely necessary to its very existence. The reorganization amounted almost to a revolution.

I have entered into these particulars for two reasons; first, because few of you are acquainted with the history of the college in which you are now assembled, and in which you intend to prosecute your studies; and secondly, because they involve a moral, a knowledge of which should be disseminated throughout the length and breadth of this continent, as a lesson to the founders and conductors of medical schools.

It will be perceived that the Jefferson Medical College had, up to its reorganization, fifteen years ago, experienced many reverses, several of which shook its very foundation, and materially impeded its prosperity, if, in truth, they did not seriously threaten its very existence. And what, it may be asked, were the causes of these reverses? Were they owing to the opposition which the school encountered from the medical profession of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania—at that time, and for many years after, the only insti-



tution of the kind in the city—the various medical colleges of the country, or the people at large? I have looked carefully into this matter, and am satisfied that the opposition from these quarters, although not without its influence, had little agency in producing these results. All new institutions, especially when they assume the attitude of rivals, must expect opposition; but such opposition, instead of being prejudicial, only serves, as a general rule, to infuse new life and vigour into the conductors and friends of the new claimant to public favour. The slanders and persecutions cast upon individuals, on setting out in life, are often of more real value to them, in enabling them to surmount obstacles and difficulties, than hosts of warm and admiring friends. It rouses their dormant energies, imparts fresh impulse to their actions, and leads, not unfrequently, to achievements which, to ordinary minds, have the appearance of superhuman. The progress of all great institutions, whether medical, literary, or scientific, is usually tardy, and it often happens that generations elapse before they are placed upon a solid and immutable basis, or before they reach their culminating point. The seed sown at their foundation frequently appears reluctant to germinate; sometimes, indeed, it is completely withered in the earth, and hence it may require to be replanted a second and even a third time before it will spring up, and afford promise of a good harvest. Or, it may be, that, after having made some progress, it is nipped by the frost, scorched by the sun, or assailed by insects, and so prevented from attaining its proper development. The founders of these institutions may be likened, in many respects, to the husbandman. They often see their best efforts rewarded only by toil, anxiety, and disappointment. They either



start wrong, or circumstances of an unpropitious character arise in the progress of their labours which frustrate their designs, or, perhaps, lead to utter discomfiture. To no country in the world is this remark more justly applicable than to our own, where nearly all the great enterprises that illustrate and adorn the human intellect are the result of individual exertion. Here government busies itself exclusively with its own affairs; it does not, as in Europe, originate and foster institutions of learning and science, throwing over them her protecting mantle, and making them a part of her national glory. On the contrary, it intrusts their establishment wholly to her people, for whose immediate benefit they are designed; and the consequence is that the self-imposed task is often very imperfectly executed, simply, or mainly, for the want of means, and of that combined operation so essential to the successful issue of all great and useful undertakings. Wherever six or seven men are associated together, in conducting a scientific or literary institution, steady and persistent harmony is hardly to be expected for any great length of time. Their temperaments and habits are often of the most heterogeneous character, and hence, although self-interest, that mighty lever of the social compact, may induce quiet submission for awhile, yet, sooner or later, the spirit of discord breaks out, and is sure to do its work. A faculty divided against itself is precisely like a house in a similar condition. Its fall is inevitable. Resignations take place; quarrels, often of a bitter and unrelenting nature, spring up; and the profession, seldom an idle spectator in such events, is not slow in manifesting its displeasure, by withholding its confidence and patronage. I believe, then—and my opinion is founded upon long reflection, and upon an extensive



acquaintance with the history of medical schools—that internal dissension in medical faculties is the great and essential cause of the downfall of medical institutions. I am quite sure that if the history of the many ephemeral colleges which have existed in this country were fully exposed to the public gaze, this would be found to have been the case. It is the worm which gnaws at their vitals, frequently, indeed, from the very commencement to the close of their short-lived career.

From the brief sketch which I have given you of the rise and progress of this College, it is evident that her checkered career, during the first fifteen years of her existence, was mainly due to the cause here adverted to. The many changes in its faculties preyed, like so many vultures, upon her constitution, and more than once engulfed her in ruin. In making these remarks I do not wish to be misunderstood. The probability is that the affairs of the Institution were as well conducted as the circumstances of the case admitted. All I wish to state is the broad and naked fact, amply borne out by the history of events. Since the reorganization of the College in 1841, up to last summer, the Faculty presented one unbroken front, and to this circumstance more than to any other, has it, in my opinion, been indebted for the unparalleled success it has since attained. It is not meant by this remark to deny that the talent and learning and personal popularity which have distinguished the present Faculty have not had their share in producing this result; but the great strength of every medical school, founded and conducted by private enterprise, depends, I am satisfied, more upon the harmony of its faculty, than upon the reputation, however great, of any of its members. Without unity it must be feeble and short-lived. The time has gone by, at least in great



degree, when men can attract pupils by the mere force of their talents and genius. The universities of Leyden, Göttingen, and Edinburgh were respectively rendered famous, in the last century, solely by the popularity of Boerhaave, Haller, and Cullen, who outshone all their colleagues in the splendour of their renown, and who conferred an enviable immortality upon those celebrated seminaries of medicine. The charm of their eloquence attracted pupils from all parts of Europe, and made them the acknowledged heads of the medical teachers of the Old World. No teachers of modern times have wielded an equal amount of influence. Rush, Physick, Chapman, Wistar, M'Clellan, Drake, and Caldwell, among the dead, perhaps approached nearer to it than any others, but even their influence was comparatively limited: they formed an important part of the faculties of the schools to which they respectively belonged, and there their value ceased.

As an alumnus of this College, it is melancholy to find that not one of the teachers under whom I served my pupilage, and who subscribed my diploma, survives. They have all fallen by the way-side, most of them in the prime and vigour of life, and in the midst of their usefulness. Their memory alone remains, as a legacy to its many graduates, and as an honour to the profession which they adorned by their labours and their fame. Dr. George M'Clellan, who was emphatically the founder of the College, and whose private teaching I had the honour to enjoy for nearly two years, has left his mark upon his age and country as one of our most illustrious surgeons; and his worthy coadjutor, Dr. John Eberle, established an enviable reputation as one of our most able scholars and distinguished authors, whose works were long used as text-books in most of our schools.



Dr. Benjamin Rush Rhees fell a victim to pulmonary consumption soon after I became a graduate; Dr. Green continued to teach chemistry up to the time of his death in 1841; and Dr. William P. C. Barton, after having been for several years chief of the Medical Bureau at Washington, died only last spring at the age of seventy. What is remarkable, the only one of the faces then familiar to me, and which now meets my eye, is that of Mr. Janitor Watson, who has stood, like a faithful sentinel, at the doors of the College, from its first opening to the present moment, a period of upwards of thirty years.

It will be my duty to teach you in this Institution the art and science of surgery, or, to adopt the title of my chair, the principles and practice of surgery. It is hardly necessary to point out to you the difference between these two terms, since their import must be sufficiently obvious to the meanest comprehension. The art of surgery is usually, though unjustly, regarded as a very humble branch of medicine, one which one practitioner may exercise nearly as well as another. Such an assertion, unfortunately too often made, and too often credited, is as absurd as it is unfounded. It assumes, like our Declaration of Independence, that all men are born equal, or, what is the same thing, that all men are endowed by their Creator with an equal amount of courage and skill; an assumption opposed to all observation and experience, and therefore not to be entertained for a moment. To operate well demands a rare combination of qualities, which only a few favoured men possess, however thoroughly they may have been educated, or however extensively they may have been engaged in the practice of their profession. To a profound knowledge of surgical anatomy, or of the re-



lations which one part of the body bears to another, must be added extraordinary manual dexterity, the most perfect coolness and self-possession, great foresight, and an eye that is never appalled by the sight of blood. Mere mechanical skill is not sufficient; if it were, there would be a hundred good operators where there is one now; nor is a profound knowledge of topographical anatomy sufficient, for it is well known that a man may be most thoroughly versed in this science, and yet not be able to go creditably through the different steps of an operation. The great qualities of an operator, qualities which are so rarely combined in the same individual, are courage, self-possession, and foresight, by which he is enabled to meet successfully every emergency that may arise after he has entered upon his painful and bloody labours. The shrieks of his patient, the sight of the vital fluid as it issues, in bold and rapid streams, from the purple channels of the body, and the fear and agitation of the by-standers, must not for a moment arrest his attention, much less turn him aside from the object of his pursuit. He must, for the time, be wholly absorbed in his business, utterly unmindful of himself and of all around him. A great operator should evince the same coolness and self-possession in amputating a limb, tying a large artery, or extirpating a huge tumour, that a great general displays during the progress of a battle. He should not be heard to exclaim, as was England's great chieftain, "Wish it were night, or that Blücher were here;" but, having once begun his operation, he should proceed steadily to its completion without regard to intercurrent circumstances, however trying or unexpected. It is reported of the illustrious Haller, that, although he had taught surgery with great success for seventeen years, yet he had never performed



a solitary operation upon a living person, for fear of inflicting pain. Such pusillanimity is sufficiently common in the members of our profession everywhere, and affords a ready explanation of the fact that there are so few good operators.

It must not be inferred, however, from what I have said, that the art of surgery is limited to the performance of bloody operations, or the use of the knife. On the contrary, it embraces every variety of process applicable to the relief and cure of accidents, diseases, and deformities. Indeed, it is here that the great beauty and utility of this department of surgery are displayed in their fullest extent and richest diversity; and hence it is that every student should endeavour to make himself familiar with its resources. The great operations of surgery are performed only, as a general rule, by great surgeons, men of ripe experience and of great reputation; but the application of apparatus and bandages, or the execution of what are denominated the minor processes, must necessarily fall to the lot of all practitioners, however limited their sphere. It is to this subdivision, then, of the art of surgery that you should direct your special attention, in order that, when you come to engage in the active duties of your profession, you may meet its constant demands with the promptness and precision which should always characterize the educated and enlightened surgeon. The fate of a practitioner is often materially influenced by the manner in which he attends to the little things, or what may not be unaptly called the trifles, of his profession. Every body can see, or thinks he can see, whether they are done well or not, and the verdict of the public in regard to the qualification of a surgeon is often based entirely upon this test.



The science of surgery is a very different thing from the art of surgery. It embraces the great principles of the healing art, the great doctrines of disease and of its treatment, or pathology and therapeutics, in their widest and most diversified signification. It is the same precisely as the science of medicine, and hence it has long been alleged, and very justly so, that surgery and medicine are one and the same science, resting upon the same immutable basis, pursuing the same object, and aiming at the accomplishment of the same end, essentially by the same means. There is, I repeat it, no distinction whatever between them, and yet, true and just and philosophical as the position is, it is surprising how rarely it has been recognised by the public, or even by the profession. Nothing is more common than to hear persons say that surgeons are not good physicians; they assume that, because a man has acquired some reputation as an operator, he must therefore of necessity be an indifferent medical practitioner. They would readily trust him with the amputation of a limb, or the extirpation of a tumour; but when it comes to the treatment of a case of fever, dysentery, or pneumonia, they are sure at once to call a physician, although he may be incomparably less skilled in the science of his profession than he who bears the title of surgeon. It is hardly necessary to say that this is a narrow and unjust view of the subject. So far from this being the case, the very reverse is true, as I shall endeavour to show more fully when I come to speak of the practical details of my chair. In all the courses of lectures that I have ever delivered on surgery, amounting to not less than seventeen, I have made it my duty to impress upon the mind of the pupil the indispensable importance of a thorough knowledge of the principles of



medicine to the successful practice of surgery. For this purpose it has been my custom to devote nearly one third of every term to the discussion of the great doctrines of inflammation and of what are denominated the heterologous formations, as preliminary to the elucidation of the practice of surgery. This custom, so proper and philosophical, as I conceive it to be, I shall pursue in my prelections in this school. My object will be to make surgeons of you in the true sense of the term; not mere operators, artists, mechanics, or hewers of flesh, or, to use a felicitous modern expression, mere knife-men; but rational, philosophical practitioners, physicians as well as surgeons, men qualified for every emergency involving human suffering and human life. It will be my endeavour to teach you the true difference between the mere operator and the enlightened surgeon, between the mere mechanic and the philosopher, between the unscrupulous knife-man and the humane practitioner, between the man without principles and the man with principles. I shall endeavour to point out to you, in as clear and tangible a manner as possible, the true limits of operative surgery, or, in other and more comprehensive terms, those cases and those circumstances where the knife should be used or where it should be withheld. So long as God shall give me strength, I shall not cease to raise my voice and to exert my humble influence against the indiscriminate, senseless employment of the knife so prevalent at the present day both in this country and in Europe. It shall not be said of me that I have been silent upon a subject which has so often animated the soul of Physick and other great expounders of our science, and led to the utterance of language which should be deeply imprinted upon the hearts and consciences of all right-thinking and honour-



able professional men. There was a noble saying which the ancient Spaniard was wont to engrave upon his Toledo blade, and which it might be well for the surgeon to remember:—"Never draw me without reason, never sheath me without honour." Surgery should at all times be conservative, but especially should it be so at the present day, when our minds are so much enlightened by the march of science. Its aim should be to preserve, not to mutilate and destroy, and yet it should always be ready and willing to obey the mandate of the intelligent and conscientious practitioner. When surgery is thus exercised it is a blessing, and not, as it has been too often denounced to be, a curse to those who are its objects.

Another duty devolving upon me by virtue of my appointment in this Institution is instruction in clinical surgery. Clinical teaching, considered in its broadest sense, has always been regarded as an object of paramount importance in every well-matured scheme of medical education. When, or by whom, it was originated is uncertain. There is good reason, however, to believe, from a passage in one of the ancient writers, that, if it was not instituted by Hippocrates, it was at all events practised by him. Until the time of this great man, medicine was little else than a speculative art, without any of the solid basis for the grand superstructure that has since been reared upon it. Hippocrates separated it from the philosophy of the schools with which it had hitherto been associated, and erected it into a distinct department of practical knowledge. In a word, he established it upon the broad basis of observation, thus founding at once the science of practical medicine and the inductive philosophy, long before the world was favoured with a knowledge of the labours



and researches of Bacon. Being the most renowned physician of his age in Greece, large multitudes of persons flocked to him to be cured of their infirmities. The most valuable knowledge which he acquired in his youth was derived from reading the votive tablets in the temple of Cos, where a brief but faithful record was preserved of every case of disease and accident that was brought there for treatment, and of the nature of the remedies employed for its restoration. After the burning of the temple, Hippocrates wrote down, with his own hands, a history of his personal experience, which he afterwards used as the basis of those great works which, while they have immortalized his name, and have conferred upon him the enviable title of "Father of Medicine," have furnished us with the first digest of medical doctrine and practice of which we have any knowledge.

Notwithstanding that the utility of clinical teaching was thus clearly recognised at the very dawn of medical science, it was destined to make but little progress for several centuries afterwards. The great school of Alexandria, founded three hundred years before the Christian era, by the munificence of the Ptolemies, and rendered so famous by the labours of Erasistratus and Herophilus, owed much of its success to its hospital facilities, which were a fruitful source of information both to its faculties and pupils. From the frequency with which dissections were carried on, it is evident that pathological anatomy must have received considerable attention, while it is equally certain that symptomatology and therapeutics were constantly studied at the bedside. Operative surgery, too, was not neglected, although its progress was necessarily tardy and obscure. Clinical instruction formed a prominent feature in the curriculum of the college of D'schondisabour in Persia, in connection



with the extensive public hospital of that city, the resort of physicians and pupils from all parts of the east. It was conducted here even with much greater zeal than at Alexandria, and was rendered eminently tributary to the advancement of medical science in that curious and interesting country. In Europe no provision seems to have existed for the cultivation of clinical medicine until after the seventeenth century. The medical schools of Monte-Cassino and of Salerno, which acquired some reputation in the eleventh century, on account of the learning of their professors, paid no attention to the subject, contenting themselves with speculative teaching and with the delivery of the views and opinions of their predecessors and cotemporaries. They were mere bookmen. Bedside medicine was entirely neglected, human dissection was interdicted by the prejudices of the people, and physicians no longer investigated disease as a rational and philosophical pursuit. It was not until after the revival of learning, that the subject began seriously to attract the attention of medical men, and to assume anything of the importance with which it has been invested in modern times. Foremost among the schools that deserve respectful mention, in this connection, is the University of Utrecht, which, under the superintendence of Straeten, one of its most distinguished professors, erected a clinic, which was long the pride and glory of that institution, and which did more than almost every thing else to maintain its prosperity. The example thus set was speedily followed by the University of Leyden, where, under the direction of Huernius, the clinic soon acquired a degree of perfection hardly surpassed by that of the present day. This great physician was the first to conduct the clinic upon a comprehensive and systematic plan, similar to that pursued



by the modern teacher. His custom was to examine every case of importance that was brought before him in the presence of his class, instituting a careful inquiry into its origin, etiology, symptomatology, and diagnosis, and prescribing such remedies as, in his judgment, were necessary for its relief. If the patient died, the history of the case was completed by a thorough dissection of the body, with a view to the detection of the seat and condition of the affected structures, or, in other words, the true cause of death. The method of Huernius, to whom, as a matter of gratitude, should be awarded the title of "Father of Clinical Medicine," was by degrees adopted by the other universities of continental Europe, and, towards the latter part of the last century, it found its way into Great Britain, where, under the guidance of the genius of Cullen, it soon made rapid progress, and acquired a firm hold upon the respect and confidence of the profession.

While the claims of the medical clinic were thus every where acknowledged, it is surprising that no attempt had been made to perform a similar service for surgery. Various causes, it may be presumed, conspired to produce this result, so disparaging to the latter branch of the profession, but the principal probably was the fact that surgery had been so long regarded merely as a mechanical art, or as a subordinate department of medicine, only fit to be exercised by inferior persons. It was not until near the close of the last century, that surgery was placed, in this particular, upon the same level as her older sister. The man for whom this honour was reserved, was Pierre Joseph Desault, a native of France, and successively surgeon-in-chief to the two most celebrated hospitals in Paris, La Charité and the Hôtel-Dieu. He had long been impressed with the ne-



cessity of this kind of teaching, and he, therefore, lost no time in using his influence in placing it upon a proper and permanent basis. How well he accomplished his purpose, every one acquainted with the history of medicine knows. His success was complete. The school of clinical surgery which he established soon acquired a European reputation, attracting pupils from all parts of France, England, Holland, Germany, Italy, and Spain, and reflecting its salutary influence over the whole civilized world. The surgical clinics of Vienna, Padua, Berlin, Edinburgh, and other cities are merely offsprings of the clinics of Desault, whose memory should be held in grateful remembrance by the student, and of whom, if this were the proper place, much might be said for your guidance and encouragement. Suffice it to state that Desault was of humble origin, but that, as he grew up, he formed vast designs, many of which, although he died before he had attained his fifty-first year, he was permitted to mature, and to realize. He was the creator of surgical anatomy, an able, fluent, and accomplished lecturer, and one of the most brilliant operators of his day in France. Despising books, as calculated, in his judgment, to mislead his mind, he spared no efforts to interrogate nature, and to study the character and treatment of diseases and accidents at the bed-side. His favourite places of resort were the amphitheatre and the dissecting-room, where he delighted to meet his pupils, and to indoctrinate them in the knowledge and philosophy of anatomy and surgery.

Two kinds of clinics, the hospital and the college, exist at this time in this country. Each has its advantages and its disadvantages, and hence it would be folly to claim, as is sometimes done, an exclusive preference of one over the other. Both are excellent in their



way, and, therefore, worthy of the respect and confidence of the young aspirant after medical knowledge. The chief advantage of the hospital clinic is that it affords better opportunities for the observation of acute disease, few cases of which can be introduced into the class-room of a college, on account of the difficulty and danger of their transportation. On the other hand, a diligent attendance upon this kind of practice often involves great fatigue, exposure, and loss of time on the part of the student. Moreover, patients affected with acute disease are not always proper subjects for exhibition in the amphitheatre of a hospital; or, granting that they are, it is not always possible for the lecturer to examine them in such a manner as to lead to profitable results. Another disadvantage, one, indeed of a very obvious character, is that the visits of the pupil are too infrequent to enable him to observe and study such cases with much benefit. The great changes which occur in the intervals he has, of course, no means of witnessing, any more than the changes of treatment rendered necessary by the varying character of the symptoms. The consequence is that nearly all the good which such cases are capable of supplying, when properly observed and studied, is measurably lost to the pupil. This he soon finds to be the fact, and hence he rarely continues his attendance for any length of time, much less throughout the entire session. In a word, he considers his time wasted in an effort to obtain what it is impossible to obtain, and, therefore, often quits in disgust at a period when he should be perfectly enamoured with his clinical pursuits.

The college clinic is eminently useful on account of the multiplicity and variety of chronic diseases which are brought before it. As at the hospital clinic, so at



this, regular periods are allotted to its service, which, taking place in presence of the entire class, affords every student an opportunity of observing and studying the cases at greater length and with more minuteness, since no detriment can arise in this, as in the former instance, from the exposure and fatigue of the patients submitted to his scrutiny. Great liberty may often be taken with this class of the sick for the purpose of exhibition, in parading them around the room while the exercises of the clinic are in active progress. Thus, a person affected with cataract may be shown to hundreds of pupils in an amphitheatre, whereas only a few pupils could inspect his eyes if he were in the wards of a hospital. But these are not the only advantages of the college clinic. In hospitals, few persons, except paupers, are admitted unless their diseases are of a more or less grave character, and hence the student is deprived of seeing, except on rare occasions, a class of patients that are of the utmost value to him in a practical point of view. It is not the rare cases, or the great operations, that a student should desire to witness, but the common cases, and the minor operations, because it is the latter and not the former that he will be obliged to deal with when he comes to engage in the active duties of his profession. Now, it is just these cases that abound at the college clinic; every variety of chronic disease, both medical and surgical, is brought to it, and every variety of minor operation performed, and that not once only, but many times during the course of the session; so that, if there be any virtue in repetition, it is impossible for the student not to be enlightened and benefited by what is passing so constantly before his eye. But the college clinic is not limited to this kind of practice, useful as we hold it to be, and as undoubtedly it is. On the con-



trary, not a few of the milder forms of acute disease are constantly brought before it, as inflammation of the eye, ear, skin, throat, bowels, and genito-urinary organs; as well as cases of recent accidents, as wounds, burns and scalds, fractures, abscesses, and other external affections. The larger operations, moreover, as amputations, the extirpation of tumours, the ligation of arteries, the excision of joints, trephining, tracheotomy, the perineal section, lithotomy, and lithotrity, are legitimate objects of the college clinic. The same is true in regard to the reduction of dislocations, and the operation for cataract, lacrymal fistula, dropsy of the abdomen, hydrocele, stricture of the urethra, nasal polypes, hemorrhoids, and numerous other maladies which it is not necessary here to specify, but the study of which is of paramount importance in every scheme of practical education.

It is impossible to place too high an estimate upon clinical instruction; and, as it abounds everywhere in this city, you will be recreant to your duty as students of medicine, if you do not avail yourselves of its advantages to the fullest extent compatible with your time and comfort. Considered as the touch-stone of the physician's knowledge, as the measure and perfection of his elementary education, you should devote yourselves, heart and soul, to its acquisition. Every case of disease, whether acute or chronic, grave or trivial, that is brought before you, should be viewed by you in the light of an important problem, which you and your teachers should endeavour to solve for your benefit and edification. No young man, whatever may be his talents, or his industry in the pursuit of knowledge, is qualified, upon leaving the lecture-room, for the discharge of the responsible duties of his profession, unless he has enjoyed unusual advantages of this kind.



Theory, however specious or ingenious, can avail but little at the bedside of the sick; practice is every thing, and should, therefore, constitute the leading object of your attention during your pupilage, especially at its more advanced periods.

The original Faculty of this School, impressed with the importance of clinical instruction, established, chiefly through the influence of Professor George M'Clellan, at an early period after its organization, an Eye Infirmary, to which was afterwards added a General Dispensary, for the express benefit of its pupils. The present Clinic, however, which has contributed so much to the prosperity and reputation of the College, and to which a large amount of time is devoted during every session, was not established until the spring of 1841. Its resources, at all times ample, have gradually increased in extent and value, affording every variety of material necessary for the illustration of the medical and surgical chairs. To enable you to form a just estimate of its importance, it will suffice to state that, during the last year, upwards of 1600 cases—namely, 813 surgical and 802 medical—were treated at it. The number of operations performed was 267, including lithotomy, amputation of the thigh, leg, and arm at the shoulder-joint, extirpation of the upper jaw, trephining, excision of the mammary gland, and resection of the elbow-joint. For the accommodation of such patients as are obliged to submit to important operations, but who are too poor to defray their own expenses, a suitable building has been provided in the immediate vicinity of the College, where they receive the necessary attentions until they are able to return to their respective homes. In addition to the advantages afforded by the College clinic, and to which I have felt it the more incumbent upon me to allude, be-



cause I have had no agency whatever in supplying them, you may have access, for a trifling fee, to the clinical lectures at the Pennsylvania Hospital in this city, by Drs. Norris, Wood, and others, and at the Philadelphia Hospital, Blockley, by the medical faculty of that immense eleemosynary establishment, one of the largest and best regulated of the kind in the world. Wills' Hospital will afford you every facility for acquiring a knowledge of the affections of the eye; and at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, under the admirable superintendence of its enlightened and distinguished physician, Dr. Kirkbride, you may witness every form of mental disease incident to our race. Our Dispensaries, too, will afford you an immense field for the observation and study of morbid action. In short, there is no city in the world, Paris and Vienna not excepted, where the young aspirant after the doctorate may prosecute his studies with more facility or advantage than in this. Hence, if you do not leave your Alma Mater, freighted with a practical knowledge of your profession, and, therefore, properly prepared for the discharge of its practical duties, the fault will be yours, not ours. Where the harvest is so abundant, it is only necessary to have industrious and faithful reapers to gather an ample crop.

The old method of conducting clinical instruction was exceedingly defective, disorderly, and unprofitable, as it took place in presence of the patient, who was thus jostled and annoyed by the pupils in their endeavour to obtain an insight into the nature of his case. Frequently, indeed, the patient was not only greatly incommoded, but subjected to positive detriment by it. Meanwhile, those only who were near him had any chance of observing his countenance, feeling his pulse, or inspecting his tongue, while, as far as the teacher



was concerned, scarcely any heard his remarks, or profited by his instruction. The great majority of students literally saw nothing. The few, indeed, who were instructed, obtained their knowledge under great difficulty, and at the expense even of their personal comfort. It was a method more befitting a circus or a public show than the wards of a well conducted hospital, consecrated to the relief and cure of disease and accident. It was not unaptly styled "walking the hospital," for it really amounted to nothing else. The modern method, although not unexceptionable, is a great improvement upon the old. It consists essentially in selecting, on every clinical day, a few cases of interest, in taking them into the amphitheatre, and in expounding their history and character in presence of the entire class, seated around the professor, as in an ordinary lecture. In this manner every one is afforded an opportunity not only of seeing every patient that is brought in, but also of witnessing the mode in which he is examined, with the final conclusion of the teacher in regard to the diagnosis of the case, and the remedies necessary for its relief. All the pupils are placed, in this respect, upon the same footing, without any of the disagreeable inconveniences belonging to the old method. The same is true when an operation is performed. Here the student, maintaining his seat, leisurely surveys the disposition and functions of the assistants, the arrangement of the instruments, the position of the patient, and the different steps of the procedure, from its commencement to its termination, including the dressings, and the replacement of the sufferer in his bed. That this method is not free from objection is certain, especially when there is a crowd of students; but, all things considered, it is perhaps as perfect as any that can be adopted; at all events, it is that which is now generally pursued in this



and other countries. The true method of obtaining a knowledge of clinical medicine, or the history of disease, is to study it at the bedside of the sick, not hurriedly, in the presence of a crowd of young men, but leisurely, with the aid of a good teacher, whose duty it is to make frequent visits, and to keep a regular systematic record of the changes in his cases. Clinical medicine, in short, should be studied at the bedside, as an object of natural history, in the same manner as a student studies botany in the field, the garden, or the conservatory, anatomy in the dissecting-room, and chemistry in the laboratory.

You are assembled, Gentlemen, at the Emporium of Medical Science, at the metropolis of the Medical schools of this continent, and at a College which is probably unsurpassed in its clinical and other educational facilities by any similar institution at home or abroad. Philadelphia, the chosen home of Æsculapius in the New World, owes not a little of her greatness to her medical schools and to her medical faculty. Much of the fair fame which she enjoys, is due to their celebrity and to their influence. She annually holds in her arms, and presses to her bosom, upwards of 1200 students, assembled from all parts of the United States, the British Provinces of North America, and from abroad, as worshippers at her various medical temples. She is emphatically the Mecca of our profession, the shrine upon which its pilgrims delight to place their yearly offerings of fidelity to the cause of science and the good of the human race. She erected the first medical school that was ever established on this continent. She fought the first battles of American medical education. She has been hallowed by the labours, the teachings, the fame, and the ashes of a Morgan, a Shippen, a Rush, a Wistar, a Dorsey, a Physick, a Parrish, a Morton, a M'Clellan, and a Chapman,



whose names, known and appreciated wherever medical science has a home, are as household words with the American profession. Who, in thinking of Philadelphia, does not at once associate the names of these and of other illustrious men with her greatness and her renown? What is it that renders a country famous, if it is not the greatness of its citizens? The island of Cos is known, at the present day, chiefly as the birth-place of Hippocrates, Apelles, and Simonides, who conferred upon it an immortality as enduring as that which Athens has derived from her philosophers, her statesmen, and her warriors. The name of Boerhaave is indissolubly associated with the fame of Leyden. Cullen was for a long time the chief ornament of Edinburgh, so distinguished for her great scholars and scientific men. Haller immortalized Göttingen. The names of Rush and Physick are identified with Philadelphia, constituting a legacy to her citizens far more noble and enduring than that bequeathed to them by Stephen Girard. Dr. Drake was the most illustrious citizen of Cincinnati; and Lexington, at one time proudly called the Athens of the West, derived, for a quarter of a century, her chief importance from her literary, scientific, and medical men.

Let me not be misunderstood. In saying that Philadelphia is the Emporium of medical science of this country, I am only reiterating what has been asserted a thousand times before, and what it would be difficult successfully to controvert. The fact that she was the seat of the first medical institution that was ever established in the country, that she has furnished a larger amount of medical literature than any other city in the Union, and that she annually educates nearly as many pupils as all the other medical schools put together, is a sufficient proof of the truth of my statement. She is, therefore, entitled to some credit for her age, her posi-



tion, and her usefulness; in a word, for the good she has done the profession, and, through the profession, mankind at large. Her medical schools have sent abroad, throughout the length and breadth of the land, from first to last, nearly 10,000 graduates, dispensing the blessings of the healing art everywhere with a liberal hand, among its citizens. Honoured, however, as she should be for what she has done, and for what she is destined to do, she does not, unless I greatly mistake her character, arrogate to herself any exclusive advantages, rights, or privileges. On the contrary she readily concedes to others what she claims for herself. Wherever the standard of medical education is erected, she recognises the talent, the science, and the enterprise of her collaborators in the great cause of the profession, and bids them, "God speed." Not a few of our provincial schools are, to say the least, as munificently endowed, as thoroughly equipped, and as ably officered, as any of the metropolitan schools of the country.

As I look around me through this densely crowded room, I behold before me young men from every section of our beloved country, the east and the west, the north and the south, the far-off British Provinces of North America, South America, France, and Germany, all in quest of medical knowledge. The same motive which induced me, more than a quarter of a century ago, to seek instruction in these halls, has impelled them to come hither on this occasion. They are animated by the same consideration, the same aspiration, the same hope, the same humanity. If we could, Asmodeus-like, remove the veil which conceals their hearts, and look into their secret chambers, we should doubtless discover various and contending emotions within, but all would be found to tend to the accomplishment of the same object and the same end.



You have entered upon a great and glorious mission; a mission which, viewed in reference to its aims and objects, may well be considered as divine. To cure the sick, to bind up the wounds of the afflicted, to abridge suffering, and to prolong life, is a pursuit worthy of the best exertion, the highest attainment, and the loftiest intellect of man. The remark of Cicero, so often quoted in illustration of the importance of the healing art, cannot be too frequently repeated; for no one, either in ancient or modern times, had a more just conception of the office and character of the physician than that illustrious philosopher: "*Homines ad deos nullâ re propius accedunt quam salutem hominibus dando.*"

To accomplish this great mission, henceforth the object and solicitude of your lives, requires vast toils and vast sacrifices. There is no royal road to medical knowledge. The path of the student is not strewn with roses; thorns and briers attend every step of his progress. Obstacles, apparently insurmountable, meet him in every direction. Pleasure, with her siren voice, and her many blandishments, spares no effort to allure him from his studies. Ignorance constantly misguides him, and faith itself often deserts him. But do not despair. Labour and toil are incident to every pursuit, however humble or exalted. A wise man has said, "Much study is a weariness of the flesh," and a greater truism was assuredly never uttered; but without study, long, arduous, and incessant, you will never be able to accomplish anything at all worthy of yourselves or of the profession of which you are destined to become members. Nor will you be able to make any satisfactory progress without a proper and systematic allotment of your time. Order is Heaven's first law, and you must be careful not to violate it in your studies. Every mo-



ment of your time should be well spent. The true student has no leisure, except for exercise for the benefit of his health. The ball-room, the theatre, and the social circle are alike unknown to him. Your motto must be, "carpe diem." Woe to him who falters, or lingers behind, in the great contest. God and the world will not hold him guiltless. A day of reckoning will come, when he shall be judged according to the manner in which he has employed his time and talents. With the light that has been handed down to you by your predecessors, and the vast facilities afforded you by our modern schools, you cannot complain if you are not instructed and educated. The noblest text-books that have ever been written, the finest models, drawings, and engravings, an abundance of preparations, dry and wet, and chemical advantages of every description, are at your command, ready to serve you in furtherance of the great objects of your pursuit. There never was a time when the great volume of nature was spread out in so open and inviting a form before the student of medicine as the present. Endeavour, then, so to use it as that you shall be able to derive from it the greatest possible benefit in the shortest possible period.

In the discourse which I have now delivered, I have spoken, it will be perceived, as much as an alumnus of this school as one of its professors. Upon the latter subject much more might be said, but time forbids. I have no promises to offer, except the endeavour to discharge the arduous and multifarious duties of my chair to the best of my humble ability. Whatever of life, and of health, and of strength, remains to me, I hereby, in the presence of Almighty God and of this large assemblage, dedicate to the cause of my Alma Mater, to the interests of Medical Science, and to the good of my fellow-creatures.